

Thursday, September 21, 2006

New Web Site Links Students to State-wide College Access Resources

Students now have an additional resource that makes college and career planning easier thanks to a new online service, **Going2college.org**, provided by Student Loans of North Dakota (SLND) in cooperation with the nation's guaranty agencies.

Going2college.org compliments SLND's Web site, mystudentloanonline.nd.gov, by featuring comprehensive information about career planning, planning for postsecondary education, finding a college and paying for college. Details about the specific programs and services provided in each state are available to students and families whenever they need it. The Web site is also designed to be a resource for guidance counselors, postsecondary institutions and community organizations.

Visitors can click on their state to learn where to get help in filling out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the types of federal and state scholarships and grants available, and which organizations and schools offer early awareness and intervention programs for students, with a special emphasis on low-income and first-generation college students.

"Going2college.org, along with SLND's Web site, brings together extensive postsecondary education resources at the local, state and national level," said Eric Hardmeyer, president of Bank of North Dakota. "It's one more way students state-wide can be informed of available resources to ease the transition to higher education."

The Web site was developed in conjunction with Mapping Your Future as part of the College Access Initiative, which was included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, and formalizes a foundational role of guaranty agencies in promoting access to postsecondary education.

In addition to general information about career planning resources, guidelines for students planning to attend college, and the federal and state financial aid available, the site provides details on:

- College resource centers in the state;
- College information and financial aid awareness events; and
- Assistance provided to low-income and first-generation college students through programs including Upward Bound, Talent Search, GEAR UP and Project Grad.

Bank of North Dakota (BND), the nation's only state-owned bank, was established in 1919 to encourage and promote agriculture, commerce and industry in North Dakota. The nation's first federally insured student loan was made by BND in 1967. SLND is administered by BND and offers a variety of loan programs to help students and parents finance a college education.